

7885













# THE MAHISHYAS.

(FORMERLY A DOMINANT CASTE OF BENGAL).

EDITED BY

Pyari Mohan Das.

PLEADER.

PUBLISHED BY

PYARI MOHAN DAS.

PLEADER.

*Price Re 1.*

1909



Printed by

Sarveswar Bhattacharyya, at The Buckland Press,

28, RAITAKKHANA ROAD, CALCUTTA.

# THE MAHISHYAS.

## CHAPTER I.

### IMPORTANCE OF THE MAHISHYA CASTE.

Mahishya is the name of a very large and important section of the Hindu community having different local names. Those who evince any interest in the study of the important sections of His Majesty's Indian subjects cannot afford to overlook the claims which the Mahishya community will press upon their attention, though it has been the persistent policy of certain interested section to misrepresent the community. As to the importance of the community it may be noted that in reply to the provincial address presented at Dacca by the leaders of the Mahishya community of the Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam, on the 5th January, 1909, His Honour the Lieutenant

Governor of Eastern Bengal and Assam said "I understand, you represent a very large and important community of the Province."

### A GENERAL VIEW.

Before entering into a detailed account of the Mahishya community as to its origin and history, we propose to place before the readers first a general view of the community as given by men in a position to speak on the matter with authority.

Mr. Sen's report ( 1 ) on the community runs thus :—

"The Mahishya caste forms an important section of the Hindu community. In the district of Dacca they are known by the

( 1 ) Mr. J. S. Sen's report on the Mahishya community to the Government, dated Dacca, the 13th July, 1907. Mr. Sen is a high class Vaidya, a senior deputy magistrate and the son of late Rai Ram Sanker Sen Bahadoor, the brightest jewel in the then Provincial Executive service in Bengal.

names, Parashar Das and Mahishya ; the title of Halua (Halik) Das being applied to them more as a term of contempt than as indicating their racial or sastrik profession—agriculture. The Mahishyas of Eastern Bengal are the same as the Chashi-Kaibartas of Midnapore, Nadia and other districts of Western Bengal, and I have no doubt they are a clean caste. I have known many of the aristocratic families of this community who are all men of light and leading and their position is nearly as good as that of the Vaidyas and Kayasthas, and their social and ceremonial customs are all alike. There is Kulin system among them, and like the aristocrats of other communities they have their servants or retainues (Sikdars) who work for them and enjoy chakran (rent-free) lands. Almost all of the upper and middle classes of the Mahishyas are Zemindars and substantial land-holders in the district of Dacca, and they are, as I understand, from the time of the Mahomedan Govern-

ment, and it was with their ancestors that the permanent settlement was made. The Biswas Zemindars of Joymantap (Police station Manikganje) the Roy Zemindars of Nannar (Police station Shavar) and the Hazra Zemindars of Dokachi (Police station Srinagar) occupy a respectable and commanding position in the localities. Besides these there is a number of substantial Taluqdars scattered all over the district. The Roy family of Patgrain (Police station Hari-rampur) once occupied a very respectable position in society. Many of the old families of the Mahishya community are now reduced to poverty. (2) Though their number

( 2 ) This observation of Mr. Sen is fully in keeping with the observation made in the Hon'ble Mr. Risley's "Castes and Tribes of Bengal," though everything occurs therein in a confused state. He says that "they have not many extensive Zemindaries now as some of their ancient families have become extinct and some have become pseudo Rajputs." He might add "as some of their estates were lost during the confusion

is comparatively small in this district, the Mahishyas are moderately educated and there is a number of graduates among them in the district. The majority of the Mahishyas are employed in the Zemindary and mercantile service and some of them are lawyers. They are a powerful race and loyal. Their importance as a community may be best known from the fact that there were many independent chiefs among them ; and they had such person among them as Dewan Jasamanta Roy, the Dewan of the Deputy Governor of Dacca. According to Mr. Risley they had 5 princedoms in the Midnapore district, and it shows their position was a commanding one."

of the Permanent Settlement." Indeed had the community been in possession of their old estates in the country as Zemindars, matter would look otherwise. At present, the Mahishyas numerically stand third in the country as landholders, the Brahmin's first and the Kayasthas, second.

Mr. Colquohon's report (3) on the community runs thus :—

"The community is large and influential. It comprises many landholders, pleaders and clerks."—

The late Mr. J. N. Smartasiromani (4) wrote as follows :

"The Chashi-Kaibartas (Mahishyas) of Bengal form an important section of its rural population. In the district of Midnapore they may be reckoned among the local aristocracy. **In the other districts where they are found, their position is only next to that of the Kayasthas**".

(3) Mr. H. A. Colquohon, the then Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet reported on the Mahishya community to the Govt. in July 1907.

(4) J. N. Smartasiromani's "Hindu Castes and Sects", page 278. Mr. J. N. Smartasiromani M. A., D. L. was Dewan of the Maharaja of Burdwan, President of the College of Pundits of Nadia and a great authority in the exposition of Hindu law, castes and sects, and the leader of the Nadia Pundit families but with a bit of Brahmanical conceit.

The view expressed by the last sentence of the above quotation is contested by the Mahishyas. We however reproduce it as it occurs in the passage. The same author continues :—

“In the Tumluk and Contai Sub-divisions of the Midnapore district they may be said to form the upper layer of the local population. A great many of them are Zemindars and holders of substantial tenures.”

View of the Sambandhanirnaya (5) :—

“The **Dases** or the **Mahishyas** had among them powerful princes and landholders from before the time of king Adishur. They have been a pure caste from time immemorial. The kings of Lata-dwipa and Kankadwipa which comprised nearly  $\frac{1}{4}$  portion of the modern districts

( 5 ) Sambandhanirnaya is a treatise on the geneology of the Kulin Brahmins of Bengal and Bengal Society. Pundit Lal Mohan Vidyanidhi of the Hugli Normal School is the author of the book. He is a high class Kulin Brahmin.



of Nadia and Jessore, belonged to the princes of this community."

Mr. Batabyal ( 6 ) wrote on the community as follows :—

"The people of this caste used to build ships and sail along the sea-coast as far as Ceylon. In fact, they were expert in plying ships as they were in agriculture, and by pursuing both commerce and agriculture they became most prosperous and powerful and **attained the foremost position** among the Bengalis at a very early period of History. There is ample evidence to show that Tumluk the ancient capital of this caste rose to eminence at a very early period."

Midnapore census report(7) runs thus :—

(6) Late Mr. Woomes Chandra Batabyal's article in the Pradipa. Mr. Batabyal M. A., B. L. was a statutory civilian. Though his theory of origin was visionary, his statements of facts were clear and faithful.

(7) Report on the District Census of Midnapur, 1891.

“The (Chashi) Kaibartas are a race or tribe whose original seat was in the up-country, their ancestors lived on the banks of the Saraju or the Gogri, in Oudh. When the forefathers of the present Chashi-Kaibartas migrated from their original home on the bank of the Saraju, their route probably lay along the eastern limit of the table-land in Central India. They were led by 5 chiefs who established as many chieftaincies in the (Midnapore) district viz,—

1. Tamralipta or Tumluk.
2. Balisita.
3. Turka.
4. Shujamutha.
5. Kutubpur.”

“The Shujumutha family is now extinct. Its last representative died a pauper some-time ago. The Tumluk and Kutubpur families though not extinct have been reduced to indigence.”

J. M. Mitra, a Kayastha wrote (8) as

(8) Pradip of 1311 B. S., a monthly magazine.

follows regarding the living representative of the Tumluk-Raj-family :—

“The pittance of Zemindari which they still have, has been divided equally between princes Surendranarayan and Mohendranarayan. Prince Surendranarayan lives in Tumluk-Gar and Prince Mohendranarayan in Baichbaria-Gar. Thus the kingdom of Tumluk once so famous and magnificent was so reduced. The heirs of the kings of a dynasty who once exercised so stupendous a power in this part of the country, have been compelled to maintain themselves with the slender income of a petty Zemindari. The ancient power of the Tumluk dynasty no longer exists ! But there was a time when the ancestors of these very princes exercised unlimited power in the land. Their ancestors went so far as to plant their flags of conquest in the land of Orissa.” The writer then quotes “An inscription procured, since Mr. Stirling wrote, by Mr. Colvin, shows that the first who

came into Kalinga *i. e.* Orissa, was Ananta Barma also called Kolahall, sovereign of Gangararhi, the low country on the right bank of the Ganges, Tumluk and Midnapur : This occurred at the end of the 11th century of our era, and from that till the beginning of the 16th century, the same family occupied the province of Orissa (vide Mackenzi's collection by H. H. Wilson, Introduction, page CXXXVIII—CXXXIX)."

Another writer (9) adds :—

"After the extinction of the Kesari dynasty, **the kings of Gangavansa**, that is the **Rajas of Tumluk**, conquered Orissa. Raja Ananta Verma, a ruler of this dynasty, was a powerful and famous king. The image of Vindhyavasini established in the Vindhya hills was one of his famous deeds. After establishing the celebrated image he dedicated the village of Dandigram situated

(9) Vide page 23, "Utkal Panchathirtha" by Jogendranath Roy. Published by Satyacharan Ghose in 1906, Calcutta.

on the banks of the Mahanadi for meeting the expense of her worship. Raja Ahiram, a later monarch, belonged to this family."

## CHAPTER II.

### LOCAL NAMES OF THE MAHISHYAS.

It will appear from what is quoted above that the Mahishya community is known locally by names more than one. Indeed like every old thing of India *e. g.* be it a race, caste, city, river or mountain this ancient Hindu community has more than one local name. But owing to local conditions and ignorance none of these will be accepted by this community generally. In some localities a certain name will be accepted and used, but in other localities it will be rejected. These are "Das," "Parasar-Das," "Chashi," "Halik," and

“Chashi-Kaibarta.” Some census writers tried erroneously to force the last name as a general one upon the community but without success; it being repugnant and unacceptable to a large section of the community, especially in Eastern Bengal and Assam. The word Mahishya is the only appellation that has been accepted. According to the orthodox views, this is the most happy nomenclature as it explains many existing conditions attached to the community which must otherwise remain as puzzles to all orthodox ethnologists and sociologists.

It has also been satisfactorily proved from the writings of the old geneologists of the Kulin Brahmins of Bengal that they applied the names **Mahishya**, **Halik** and **Das** alternately to this caste. The Rajas of Latadwipa and Kankadwipa were described by Edu Misra, the greatest authority on the Brahmin geneology, as **Das**. His Translator Nalupanchanan styled the Rajas as **Halika** in the 16th century. Others of the

same profession and times described the same Rajas **as Mahishyas.** (10)

The existence of the Mahishya community in Bengal has been testified by all the important Brahmin genealogists of the country. One of them says "when the Mahishyas attained power in Bengal they established independent kingdoms." (11)

It is not our intention to multiply quotations. The word Mahishya was well-known in Bengal from earliest times; so much was this the case that late Babu Jadavchandra Lahiri stated in his work "Kulakalima" compiled from old Brahmin genealogical works some thirty-years ago that owing to a great dispute between the Mahishya Rajas of Lata and Kanka and King Ballal Sen with regard to Subarna Brahmins, the latter tried

(10) "Kulakalima", a compilation about Kulinism by late Jadavchandra Lahiri, a high class Kulin Brahmin, and a pleader at Mymensing.

(11) Vide page 238 of "Gouré Brahmin."

his best to degrade the profession of cultivation, **the profession of the Mahishyas !!**

## CHAPTER III.

### MEANING OF THE WORD MAHISHYA.

The derivative meaning of the word Mahishya is **"agricultural people."** **Mahi** means earth or soil, **Sho** means tearing; **hence the secondary meaning** is cultivation, the suffix meaning pertaining to.

In ancient India agriculture was an honourable profession which none but the twice-born castes could undertake. The very word "Aryya" according to late Professor Max Muller means a cultivator or tiller of the soil, as opposed to the nomadic and hill-races who did not know agriculture. **A Mahishya** is a tiller of land to a certain extent in the sense **in which the Aryans were cultivators.**

The special class of Aryans called the



Vaiśyas and Mahishyas have, independently of the derivative meaning, special texts of old in their favour entitling them to cultivate land as forming an upper grade in the ancient social system of India. In order to understand Mahishya it is necessary to know some texts on the matter.

According to the old texts there were **only four castes** among the Hindus :—

“The Brahmin, the Kshatriya and the Vaisya castes are the twice-born ones, and the 4th the Sudra has only one birth ; there is no 5th caste.”

*(Manu 4, Chapter X)*

“In each of these 4 castes those children only, who are begotten on wedded wives equal in caste and married as virgins, belong to the same caste as their fathers.”

*(Manu 5, Chapter X)*

That is a child in order to be same caste with his father, must be begotten on a mother who is equal in caste to the father and is married lawfully.

But if the lawfully married couple do not belong to the same caste, the issue of the couple does not belong to the father's caste. There are special rules for regulating these matters. They are :—

“Sons begotten by twice-born men (*i.e.* Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaisyas) on wives of the castes next lower, they declare to be similar to their fathers but blamed on account of the comparative lowness of their mothers.” *Manu 6, Chapter X.*

Sir William Jones in his well-known translation of *Manu* renders the above text into English with Kulluka's glossary added, in the following way :—“Sons begotten by twice-born men on women of the class next immediately below them, wise legislators **call similar**, not the **same** in class with their parents, because they are degraded to a middle rank between both, by the lowness of their mothers : They are named in order (1) *Murdhavisikta* (2) **Mahishya** and (3) *Karana*.”

According to the old laws of ages other than Kali or the Iron age, the 4 castes could marry girls of their own castes as well as those belonging to castes below them but not above them. Thus a Brahmin could marry a Brahmin, a Kshatriya, a Vaisya and a Sudra girl ; a Kshatriya could marry a Kshatriya, a Vaisya and a Sudra girl ; a Vaisya could marry a Vaisya and a Sudra girl and a Sudra could marry a Sudra girl only *i.e.* a Brahmin could have taken 3 wives of unequal castes, a Kshatriya 2 and a Vaisya only one wife of unequal caste. Children begotten on these wives did not become same castes either with their fathers or with their mothers, they got special caste-names.

Thus a child begotten by a Brahmin on a Kshatriya wife is called **Murdhavisikta**, on a Vaisya wife **Ambasta** and on a Sudra wife **Nishada** ; a child begotten by a Kshatriya on a Vaisya wife is called **Mahishya**, on a Sudra wife **Ugra** ; a child begotten by

a Vaisya on a Sudra wife is called **Karana**,  
*Manu 6, 8, 9, 10 Chapter X. Yajnavalkya.*

Thus Mahishya is born of a Kshatriya father and a Vaisya mother. (12).

## CHAPTER IV.

### MAHISHYAS—TEXTS—SATUS.

Mahishya is born of a twice-born father (Kshatriya) and twice-born mother (Vaisya). There is no interval between the father and the mother's castes *i. e.* the parents of Mahishya are immediately next in order ; the

(12) It is to be borne in mind that the four original castes developed into 12 good castes by intermarriage. Of these 12, 4 is original and 8 is newly formed mixed castes. These 8 castes again by marrying among themselves and the 4 original castes gave rise to good many new castes and so on till the castes became innumerable. (Vide Manu 29, 30 and 31, Chapter X.).

natural order being (1) Brahman (2) Kshatriya (3) Vaisya and (4) Sudra.

“Tose sons of the twice-born who are begotten on women without an interval between the classes mentioned in order, or at the interval of one or two castes in the direct order are called as belonging to their mothers’ castes.” *Manu 4, Chapter X.*

Kulluka the celebrated commentator of Manu explains the above text as follows :—

“These children really belong to mixed castes quite different from their fathers and mothers’ castes, yet they have been styled in the text as belonging to their mothers’ castes. This has been done with a view to lay down that they will get the ceremonials and rites pertaining to their mothers’ castes”.

As to their position Manu lays down in **Sloka 6, Chapter X** that “they are degraded to a middle rank between the Kshatriyas and Vaisyas.”

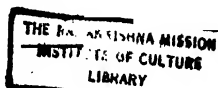
Commentator Kulluka explains the above text in this way :—“Being styled as

similar to their father, they are lower than their father's caste but higher than their mother's caste."

Thus Mahishya is born of a Kshatriya father and Vaisya mother. He is just below the Kshatriyas but above the Vaisyas in position, he is to follow rites and ceremonies prescribed for the Vaisyas.

The position of the Mahishyas was fully discussed and admitted by all the eminent Pundits of the country at various periods. (13)

(13) Vide (a) Vyavastha of the whole professorial staff of the Calcutta Sanskrit college under late Mahamahopadhyaya Nilmani Nyayalankar M. A., the then principal of the college. (b) Vyavastha of the whole congregation of the Nadia Pundits. (c) Vicrampur Pundits. (d) Chand-pratap Pundits. (e) Bhatpara, (f) Calcutta, (g) Midnapur. (h) Mithila or Tirhoot, (i) Benares, (j) Chitrakut and (k) Dravira Pundits' Vyavastha, all published.



7, 385

## CHAPTER V.

### DISTINCT CASTES WITH ONE IDENTICAL NAME.

The history of tribes is not generally so simple as one will like to have it. It will not do to say that the Mahishyas as described in the ancient lawbooks of the Hindus have always been as they were described. They had to pass through various sorts of political and social revolutions, the like of which perhaps never occurred in other parts of the world. The ancient Sanskrit writers like Chitshukajogindra, Sridhar, Nilkanta, Nagaji, and others, who are accepted by the orthodox Hindus as the highest authorities on matters of spiritual and historical questions so far as the Hindu society is concerned, have unequivocally laid down that the ancient social condition ceased to exist long long ago ; and that now we have to deal with mere shadows of ancient realities. It will suffice to say that according to the ancient authorities, the second caste *i. e.* the

Kshatriyas are now totally extinct. How they became extinct has been clearly demonstrated by many veteran writers of old. A study of these writings is really the study of ancient political history of India in the genuine orthodox style. Our community cuts a prominent figure in those writings. As it is not possible for us to enter into a discussion of those writings, neither to give a clear idea of the ups and downs in the national life of our community in this paper, we must however try our best to give an outline.

We have already shown that "sons begotten by Kshatriya father and Vaisya mother used to be called Mahishyas." The mixing of the Kshatriyas and Vaisyas being natural and sanctioned by the sacred texts, these two castes *i. e.* the fighters and cultivators, of all others, mixed in the greatest number. The well-known Jadava section of the Kshatriya race was, according to all opinions, the most numerous in India. The



traditional accounts hyperbolically state that they became 56 crores in number ! However making allowance for this gross exaggeration it is universally held that they were the most numerous and powerful in ancient India. All the members of this numerous tribe could not secure military occupation, and like a large number of the modern Rajputs sank into agriculturist, shepherds and bands of robbers. These agriculturist Jadus became then closely allied to the Vaishyas—the agricultural section of ancient India. This opportunity of admixture gave rise to the formation of a numerous body of men technically called the Mahishyas, half-warriors and half-agriculturists by profession.

It is positively stated in “Harivansa” and all the “Puranas” that a class of Goalas ( shepherds ) directly descended from the Jadu stock. It may be stated here, that it is thus that the Mahishyas sprung principally from the Jadu tribe on their father’s side.

We have already shown by the quotations made in the first chapter that the word **“Chashi-kaibarta”** is also used in some parts of the country specially in Western Bengal **to indicate the Mahishyas**. The addition of the epithet **“chashi”** was necessary to avoid confusion with the fishermen who also describe themselves as Kaibarta, and are known in the country as **Jalia-kai-barta** and **“Dhibara”**.

The Mahishyas or the Chashi-kaibartas or the Dases form a respectable caste with position, power, influence, and history well-known to all; whilst the **Jalia-kaibartas** or the **“Dhibaras”** form a very degraded caste having no position whatever in the Hindu society, and forming a very miserable community. They are distinct not only by profession, position in the society, and other incidents, but are totally distinct in origin too.

We quote below a text of the Brahma-baibarta Puran which may be found in any

of the printed editions and manuscripts available in any centre of Sanskrit learning in India. The text is :—

“Kshatrabirjyén Vaisyám Kaibarta parikirtita  
Kalon tibarasansargát dhibarah patito vubi”.

It is translated as follows :— (14)

“Son born of a Kshatriya father and Vaisya mother (called Mahishya in other texts) is known by the name of Kaibarta also.”

“Dhibara (15) (fisherman who was born

(14) All the eminent Pundits of the country have translated the Sloka in this way ( vide, opinions of Nadia Pundits &c. &c.)

(15) The Dhibaras or fishermen have thus a distinct origin. They are born of a Vaisya father and Kshatriya mother in inverse order and are very low, have mixed with Teurs their co-partner in fishing. The Dhibaras are also called Jalia-kaibartas. The fishing or Jalia-kaibartas have been described by **Manu, (Chapter X, 34)** as “born of a Nisháda (hunter) father and Ayo-gabi (*huntress*) woman destined to work in boat and fish.” The Dhibaras and Jalia-kaibartas having a common profession and both being low, formed one caste of fishermen now called Jalia-kaibartas as well as Dhibaras.

of a Vaisya father and Kshatriya mother in the inverse order) becomes degraded in the Kali Juga as he associated with a fishing caste called Teurs."

The great authority of late J. N. Smarta-siromani M. A. D. L., therefore lays down :—  
 "The designation of Kaibarta is applicable **to distinct classes**, having different occupations. (16) Of these the Chashis and

(16) As illustration of castes having a common name but distinct in origin, profession and caste-status, let us take the Vaidyas, a caste having a high position in the Hindu society. The word Vaidya is applied to many other castes who are not only far inferior to the high class Vaidyas, but are distinguishable from one another, socially, professionally and by birth. The snake-charmers of Barisal are called "**Mala-Vaidyas**" (Vide Brahmbaibarta Puran Part I. Chapter 10.) and form a very low caste ; the washermen are known as "**Sukla-Vaidya**" (white-Vaidyas); the Baruis call themselves "**Lata-Vaidya**" and so on. But yet all these are distinct castes. We have the **Kayasthas** who have position in the society and **Maghua Kayasthas** who are simply untouchable. All these castes are easily distinguished and their respective caste-status

Laksminarayanas of Midnapore are the most numerous and have the highest position recognised duly. Similarly we have 3 distinct castes called Baniás or Baniks who are not only distinct by origin and status but also by profession. An additional epithet is added to the word Banik to distinguish these three castes viz ;—(1) the Gandha-Baniks, (2) the Sankha-Baniks and (3) the Subarna-Baniks. The Gandha-Baniks are sellers of spices and have decidedly a respectable position, the Sankha-Baniks are cutters of shells and have a fair rank both being clean castes ; whilst the Subarna-Baniks originally sellers of gold are, notwithstanding their wealth and education, decidedly unclean. Again we have two distinct castes under the name of "Gopa," one being the "Sat-Gopa" and the other being "Pallab-Gop". The profession of the former is cultivation and that of the latter tending cattle and selling of milk. The position of the former is much higher than that of the latter. Likewise we have the "Ful-Mális" and the "Bhui-Mális". The first is garland-making caste, the second is the sweeper caste. The first is a clean and respectable caste and the second is the lowest and most despicable caste whose very touch is polluting and many of the latter serve as scavengers. Thus similarity of name with reference to castes in the Hindu society does not at all indicate oneness of caste.

tion. In the district of Midnapore they may be reckoned among the local aristocracy. In other districts where they are found, their position is only next to that of the Kayasthas". He adds that "The Jalia-kai-bartas are fishermen, are unclean castes. They have a very low caste-status." (Vide, "Hindu Castes and Sects", pages 279, 315).

The distinction has been shown clearly so that no confusion whatever may occur in forming an idea of the Mahishya community, a big, influential and respectable section of the Bengal Hindus.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE NATURE OF SOCIAL CONTEST IN BENGAL.

After the conquest of a large portion of Bengal by the Sens, there were two contending social and political forces in the country. The Sens and the Mahishyas. The

Sens as supporters and patrons of the newly arrived Brahmin colonists and more powerful of the two, claimed and secured better title to the leadership of the then Hindu society of Bengal. But the Mahishyas though overwhelmed by the then Sen power, yet under the powerful Mahishya rulers of Lata and Kanka did not yield so readily. The history of this contest as preserved in the writings of the Brahmin genealogists of Bengal, was recapitulated by a high class Varendra Brahmin, late Jadav Chandra Lahiri (17) in his work "Kulakalima" published some thirty years ago. It runs thus :— 7385

"The Sabarna Brahmins already anticipated the evil designs of Ballal Sen when he was classifying the Brahmins so arbitrarily. They did not want that honour and leaving his kingdom went over to Mahishya

(17) Mr. J. C. Lahiri was a Vakil in the district court of Mymensing.

Rajas (18) of Lata and Kanka who gave them shelter. Ballal knew that force against those kings was useless. He therefore entreated them to drive away the Sabarna Brahmins from their kingdoms. But they would not do it. The Sabarnas however secured their position ultimately."

"After quarrel with his son Laksman who ruled Western Bengal, Ballal ruled only Eastern Bengal. His sinful mind maintained malice against the caste to which the Rajas of Lata and Kanka belonged. He proclaimed that cultivation which was the caste-profession of the Mahishyas was a sinful one, as in cultivating land numerous insects are to be killed with ploughs. This was a Budhistic view according to which

(18) Another geneologist authority Edu Misra of the 15th century and another eminent geneologist named Nalupanchanan who translated Edu Misra in the 16th century described the Rajas as "Dás Rajas" and "Halik Rajas" respectively. It is most satisfactory that all the conclusions of the Mahishya Bibriti should be verified from such an unexpected quarter.



killing of every sort is sinful. Though outwardly a Hindu, at heart Ballal was a Buddhist ; he did not like Hinduism though he professed great attachment to it, and under that pretension began to classify the Brahmins to the great indignation of many. His enmity towards the Sabarnas is well-known."

Moreover Ballal Sen conferred kulinism on the children of the five servants who followed the Brahmins in Bengal. The word "Navasaka" according to the dictum of Sankar Bhatta was a term to be applied to that group of the Sudras who were untouchable and for touching whom penance was to be prescribed. Ballal raised them to the status of clean Sudras. This proved galling to the then Mahishyas of Bengal even then a half dominant caste.

Their attitude was one of protest against this sort of social interference. It was thus that the Mahishya Rajas of Lata and Kanka moved to interfere on behalf of the oppres-

sed Brahmins the Sabarnas, against the will of Ballal Sen who was somewhat like an overlord Raja. The Mahishyas alone who occupy a strong position in the society yet cry down the anomalies called to existence by the whims of Ballal Sen. Those castes who now claim highest rank among the non-Brahminical castes of Bengal and special political privileges in the name of the people of the country still consider the Mahishyas though badly educated a dangerous rival in many matters. Even, at present, it is very easy on the part of some people to brow-beat and co-erce the artisan castes, the shop-keepers, the barbers, the washermen, the fishermen, the carpenters and such others, to their own views however vicious that may be, but the matter stands on a quite different basis when they have to deal with the Mahishyas whose status and strength have already been shown in the first chapter.

---

## CHAPTER VII.

### CONNECTION OF THE MAHISHYAS WITH LAND.

The Mahishyas form about 1/9th of the Hindu population of Bengal, and Eastern Bengal and Assam. From what we have said it will appear that they were once the biggest land-holders of the country. **According to Dr. Grierson** "they formed several great families of which that of Raja Tumluk still survives. Circumstances occurred which split up these big estates into small ones most of which are lost to the community. The community was then gradually reduced to middle class and petty land-holders. With the exception of the Jàan Bazar and Tali-ganje families, the community cannot boast of any other family holding such extensive Zemindaries. **According to the Hon'ble Mr. Risley** the Mahishya community now **occupy numerically the third place** as land-holders in the land, the first place being

occupied by the Brahmins and the second Kayasthas. A large section of the community has become direct occupiers of soil as agriculturists under various sorts of tenancies and tenures. According to the late Mr. J. N. Smartasiromani M.A., D.L., it is the Mahishyas, the Aguris and the Satgops who are the bona-fide Hindu cultivators of Bengal *i. e.* who have a respectable status in society. But the number of the Aguris and the Satgops is very small. It is true that many low castes also recently took to cultivation ; but they have been always regarded as recent usurpers whose bona-fide profession was and still is, to a great extent, boating, fishing, hunting, palanquin-bearing and serving as out-door menials of the respectable castes. Sir William Hunter also excluded the low-caste cultivators from the bona-fide Hindu cultivators of the land. He included in the bona-fide list only the Mahishyas, the Aguris and the Satgops as held by the late Smartasiromani.

Thus the Mahishyas **both as land-holders and agriculturists** form the largest land-occupying caste among the Bengal Hindus. **The Mahishyas have, therefore, great stake in the land.**

Unlike other castes the Mahishyas have in lands an essential element of their condition of life. They have not been able to receive high education worth the name ; no, adequate provision has been made for them as yet ; now-a-days ordinary education which they possess fetch them but little service. They are yet almost unrepresented in the Government service. Land to a Mahishya whether as a tenant or a land-holder is, therefore, to him a question of vital importance.

The Mahishyas believe that it is the British Government whereunder their interests as well as those of other classes have been best safe-guarded, and under which they hope for a still better state of things. Any violent constitutional and administrative

change, from a misconception of existing state of things under the existing conditions of several classes, may, they fear, give unbridled licence to the rapacities of some. It is from an apprehension of the return of a state of insecurity that the Mahishyas are anxious to see the maintenance of the authority of the British Government, supreme and absolute in all matters. It is apprehended that these sound views have not yet been duly appreciated. There is no time for hesitation in moving in the right direction.

The Mahishyas have always been regarded in this country as best men capable of looking after landed property even instinctively when almost without education. We again quote from the late great authority of J. N. Smartasiromani M.A., D.L., who though a keen observer was unduly severe and a little unsympathetic. He wrote "with their ancestral reputation for oppressing the people, a good many of them are able to secure

high offices in the service of those Zemindars who seek to improve their rent-rolls by the simple method of forcibly evicting the freeholders and the permanent tenants from their lands." This is a little exaggeration. Babu Krishna Chaitanya Bhoumik, the present manager to the estates of the Maharaja of Nattore, with a great credit of long service in that capacity, has never proved a tyrant. The late Roy Nilmani Mandal Bahadur, the well-known manager to the estates of the Brahmin Raja of Mahishadal never exhibited that nature. The fact is, though backward in education, the Mahishyas being old land-holders of the land, understand management of land and can exercise influence over tenants which no other caste can do. It is for this reason that many of them are appointed by Zemindars specially in the estates of Western Bengal and in some places of Eastern Bengal too.

Though badly educated as a class the

Mahishya community possess intelligence to appreciate the benefits of the British rule in India. They entertain great hopes. May they utilise the opportunities offered by the Government to ameliorate their condition in common with the rest of India and get English education in adequate share ! And may they come gradually to the forefront rank of the loyal citizens of this vast and magnificent British Empire !

## CHAPTER VIII.

### EDUCATION IN THE MAHISHYA COMMUNITY.

It is necessary that an idea of the existing condition of education in the Mahishya community should be given.

It must be admitted that the condition of education of the Mahishya community has remained almost stationary for the last hundred years. The Mahishyas have remained in matters of education exactly



where they were hundred years ago. They seem to have remained almost oblivious of the **wonderful changes produced by University education on some sections** who are their close neighbours, and whose condition was not much better than theirs if not worse on the whole.

It is well known that **hundred years ago** there was **nothing in the place** of what is now called **high education in the country**. Sanskrit high education was practically shut out from the profane gaze of the public, and it was only a small number of important and spiritually disposed Brahmin families who enjoyed the privilege of studying the ancient holy literature of the Brahmins. Among the rest, those who were under the necessity of acquiring a knowledge of reading and writing had to consider their education brought to perfection if they could write a swift and good hand, could cast accounts, draw ordinary documents and recite some

Bengalee religious poems. Those who were considered ambitious, had to add to their curriculum a scanty knowledge of Persian poetry, history and fables. But this was the lot of a very few. **The majority of the gentry belonging to the several respectable castes including the Mahishyas, had to remain satisfied with education described above.** They had to manage everything with this sort of knowledge.

We have already stated in the memorial the condition of our old aristocracy. They were always averse to clerical service. The poorer members very reluctantly and rarely took to it. The well-to-do land-holders as a class rarely try for service. There is also a considerable number of respectable Mahishyas who were in the habit of taking service from long time back. All these classes form the gentry. They have always been acquainted with reading and writing. The old aristocracy and even recently grown land-holders have always tried hard

to remain aloof from service. This is the reason why the community could not keep pace with the time during the last half a century.

Those members of the Mahishya gentry who have been compelled to seek for service have been always considered very eligible candidates for posts in the offices of Zemindar. The stock of knowledge described above, with strong commonsense, determination and devotion to the cause of their employers made the Mahishya candidates very welcome in the offices of the Zemindars in those good old days. These qualifications made them the greatest favorites even with the Indigo planters in recent times. In fact, the Aguris and Mahishya employes were once considered the right men in the right place in protecting the interest of a large number of Bengal Zemindars. And even in those days of high education the proudest of Bengal Zemindars do not feel much inclined yet to dispense with their

services. The most successful manager of the estates of the Brahmin Raja of Mahishadal, late Roy Nilmoni Mandal Bahadur, was a Mahishya. Babu Krishna Chaitanya Bhoumik, the able manager of the estates of the Raja of Nattore, is a Mahishya. A number of responsible officers in the offices of Dighapathia, Nattore, Puthia, Burdwan, etc., etc., are Mahishyas. A number of Mahishyas have held important posts in the offices of Zemindars in some of the districts of the Dacca and Surma Valley divisions, from which situations they are being gradually ousted. The Mahishyas being thus a community from which a large number of men had to be recruited for services in the Zemindary, Mahajanee and other private offices, and there being a considerable class of land-holders, farmers, traders, etc., etc., among them, the Mahishya community have always among them a considerable number of men capable of reading and writing, though their standard of education

has not been high. It is for this reason that, although the number of literate Mahishyas is about 20 per cent. less than the number of literate Kayasthas, the total number of literate Mahishyas will not fall below the total number of literate Kayasthas, the Mahishya population being almost equal to the Brahmin and Kayastha population taken together. Thus although capable of considerable improvement, **the condition of elementary education** in the Mahishya community can be styled **tolerably fair**.

**It is only in high education that the condition of the community is deplorable.** It is in matters of high education that the community has slept for half a century, until it finds itself almost helpless before the onslaught of high education of their neighbours. The want of high education is rendering them incapable of protecting their own interest in the country which is not significant. Those Mahishyas whose eyes have opened now perceive to

their great remorse that within a few years they have imperceptibly sunk too deep in the mire to be able to extricate themselves without extraneous help. And who is to help them? They cannot expect any help from any other Hindu community, because it has become an essential characteristic of our present Hindu social organisation, that the interests of the different sections must always continue to be conflicting, and they must continue to trample on one another's rights for an indefinite period, and that the ignorance of the backward sections must continue to be a source of strength to the wiler sections. And even if it were not the case, no other community can be said to be strong enough to render help to a different community after discharging its fancied unending first duties to its own community. Therefore it remains that nothing but a glance of kindness and favour of the gracious and benign Government can help the Mahishyas in ameliorating their condition.

Under the present conditions, self-help on the part of the Mahishya community cannot fail to form but an insignificant factor only. Now it remains to be seen in what way we may receive that help from the benign Government.

The majority of the gentry of the Mahishya community who are now expected to flock to the schools for receiving the gift of high education, having, owing to reasons stated above, scarcely sufficient means left now to do so. It is no easy matter for them to bear the full burden of modern education. There can be no question about intellectual capacity of the boys of this vast and once so powerful a community, for, those of the Mahishyas who have competed for University distinctions, have rendered excellent account of themselves. If proper educational facilities could be brought within their easy reach, it is certain that Mahishyas as a community could give a very good account of themselves in a short time.

I may mention here that, besides poverty, **there are other difficulties** on the part of the Mahishya boys **taking due advantage of the existing educational institutions.** Because like some other respectable classes, the Mahishyas form a part of the rural population of the country. The existing educational institutions are located in the towns and head-quarters, and when in a village, that village is not a Mahishya centre. The educational institutions are thus away from the reach of the Mahishyas. The town and head-quarters are honey-combed by certain sections only, where they have their own way unfettered. These institutions are, therefore, most convenient to the boys of those sections only. It becomes too expensive, considering the slender means of the Mahishya gentry to send their boys to the head-quarters, and when some boys are sent, they are almost left to shift for themselves.

**To remove these difficulties, it is**



necessary that the educational institutions be brought within easy reach of the Mahishya boys, and that they feel at home in those institutions. It is also necessary that the boys may enjoy therein a healthy freedom of thought and action uncontrolled by extraneous force and under sympathetic and healthy supervision.

**The existence of a service-guild** in the country no doubt rendered education of doubtful utility beyond the confines of certain classes. But as that evil is being removed by the benign Government, there is no reason why such an intelligent and influential community as the Mahishyas should not flock out for receiving education when proper arrangement is made to bring it home to them.

In order to bring education within easy reach of the community it would be better to draw a large number of the Mahishya boys of the interior to the head-quarters by making suitable provision there for their

comfortable boarding and lodging at a cheap rate, under strict and vigilant supervision, so that they may pay due attention to education, acquire a habit of paying due respect to the guardians and lawful authorities, and become in the long run fit for responsible positions. Instead of being in the interior, it would be advantageous for them to be in the big towns and see as it were the face of the sun after a long period of national darkness. I wish that some Middle English and High Schools be established in the Mahishya centres where under the present circumstances, it would be considered more wise to keep the boys in the interior at first. Some schools must have to be established in the Mahishya centres as it would be impossible to draw all the boys to the head-quarters, innumerable difficulties, principally financial ones, standing in the way of doing so. Then, again, the conditions under which the Mahishya boys study do not justify that

they should be left to compete for scholarships with those who study under far better and more favourable conditions. **Having regard also to the fact** that certain sections only have been all along enjoying the scholarships, freeships, stipends and special scholarships granted by the Government, **it would not be considered unjust if some of the scholarships, freeships and stipends be specially reserved for this community.**

Some have expressed themselves so far as to say that the Mahishyas have not been slow in taking advantage of the educational facilities offered by the Government. Nothing can be more erroneous and misleading than such assertion. We have already shown that the Mahishya community constitute nearly 1/9 portion of the Hindu population of the new province. In point of influence and social status their position is undeniable. We admit they have received a fair share of **common reading**

**and writing.** But to say that they have received due share of high education worthy of them **is a gross blunder.** The whole province cannot show **more than 30 (thirty) Mahishya graduates** and about **40 (forty)** undergraduates both living and dead. What is the number of Kayastha graduates? Are they not counted by thousands? Do they not pass University examination by thousands every year? Are not the Mahishya gentry as much aristocrats as any other class? Have they not fallen down from a position which no other Bengal Hindu aristocracy attained? It will not do to say that a large portion of the Mahishyas are agriculturists and therefore the education of the aristocracy and old gentry of the Mahishyas should be neglected, and that primary education will be spread among the agriculturist class as a compensation. We would request not only the Government but the high-minded Englishmen whether official or non-official

to direct their attention to the matter of education and see that the Mahishyas get their due share. Our gentry have suffered much, and have become poor. They cannot stoop to profession not followed by the other gentry. They have become too poor to pay for modern education.

The share which the Mahishya community is yearly contributing to the public fund that is being drained off for educating other classes is not inconsiderable. A portion of that share at least ought now to be reserved for the benefit of the contributors themselves. We think no question of political expediency should interfere with the just claims of the Mahishya community hitherto almost entirely neglected. It is desirable that the attention of the Education department should be adequately directed towards the matter.

---

## **CHAPTER IX.**

### **A HISTORICAL SKETCH.**

We shall notice here briefly some of the old but no longer existent principalities of this community. Direct lineal representatives of most of these families still survive though in indigent condition.

### **MIDNAPUR AND HIJLI.**

#### **1. The Raj-family of Tumluk.**

Támbralipta or modern Tumluk was the capital of the ancient kingdom of Tumluk. It was a maritime kingdom comprising the whole of southern Bengal to the border of Orissa and had control over Bay of Bangal. That part of Tumluk-gar in the modern town of Tumluk where Raja Surendranarayan Roy, the lineal descendant of the kings of Tumluk, resides, is merely a corner of the old palace. Several gentlemen both European and native have written on Tumluk and its princes. A prince of the Tumluk

family called Kolāhal invaded Orissa in the 11th century and his descendants ruled that province.

The present Raja is both in descent from the original founder of the kingdom, Raja Mayuradwaja. The Pathan conquerors of Bengal could make no impression thereon. The 47th king was made tributary of the Moghuls in 1654 A. D. Subsequently the kings were called "hereditary Zemindars of Tumluk" in the court of Murshidabad. The estate came in direct contact with the Company's Government during the time of Rani Krisnapria and Rani Santoshpriya on whose representation the Governor ousted Mirza Didarbeg who had forcibly usurped the Raj for 16 years up to 1760 A.D. Raja Anandanarayan Roy an adopted son of one of the Ranis entered into Decennial settlement with the Government at an annual Jama of ~~Rs~~ 10,05,517 as 3. pies 3 and received from the Government in perpetuity ~~Rs~~ 14691 per annam. The salt department

acted in a manner from the results of which the Rajas could never recover. The estate, in course of time, passed piecemeal in other hands. Rajas Surendranarayan and Mahendranarayan are the living representatives of the family possessing a pittance of Zemindary for subsistence.

## 2. The Raj-family of Mayanagar.

Mayanagar is situated on the western border of the Midnapur district. Even at the commencement of the British rule it was considered as a very strong and important place. The description of the Gar or fort of the Rajas as described by the then Commissioner of Orissa and quoted by **Sir William Hunter** in his statistical account runs thus :—

“Even in the quieter and more civilised parts of the district the country contained many forts or strongholds to retreat on the occasion of the incursions of the Maharattas or their jungle neighbours. Killa Mayanachoura is a well-known place of this kind,



It is surrounded by two ditches, one wet and one now dry, both formerly very deep and broad and filled with alligators. Within its inner ditch was another defence of closely planted bamboos so intertwined with each other as to be impervious to an arrow and unapproachable by cavalry which formed the main part of the Maharatta invaders. The ground thus enclosed is wide and contained many houses."

"The Raja of Mayanachoura was not then a peaceful subject and used to shut himself up in his fort whenever called upon to settle for his lands or to pay his revenue."

The founder of the family cannot be ascertained ; but a remote ancestor of the family named Raja Kalandirama Shamanta, 18th in descent in the ascending line from his present lineal descendants, emerges out as holder of Balisita-gar under the Orissa kings watching over this part of Orissa dominions. His 6th descendant the well-known Raja Gobardhananda Bahubalindra defied

the authority of the Orissa sovereign. An expedition was sent against him, he fought bravely in vain and was carried as a prisoner to Cuttak. But the king was greatly pleased with him, restored him to his chieftaincy and asked him to reduce the fort of Mayanagar then in possession of Raja Sridhar Hui, a rebellious chief of his own clan. He was moreover honoured with the gift of a wooden throne, royal umbrella and other emblems of royalty, and was recognised as Garjat-chief. (19) Thus empowered, the prince returned to his own capital Balisita, besieged Mayanagar, drove away the rebellious Raja Sridhar Hui and occupied the fort of Mayanagar himself. He made considerable additions and alterations to the fort which was considered as impregnable at the time. He transferred his head-quarters from his old Balisitagar to the newly conquered fort of Mayanagar

(19) Garjat means hereditary holder of a fort and a principality attached to it under the Orissa sovereign.

which remained in possession of his descendants for ever. He built another fortification at Titdah where tlaely in 1729 A. D. Raja Madhusudanballav Srichandra Paul of Narayangar took shelter with his army when hard pressed by the Maharattas. Raja Gobardhananda made incursions in the territories of the then independent kings of Banabistupur in the district of Bankura. Mayanagar came under the sway of the Company's Government during the life-time of Raja Jagadananda Bahubalindra. For some time the Rajas were treated with indulgence and were regarded in the light of tributary chiefs. It is for this reason that the Rajas opposed permanent settlement. This led to a slight disturbance. The Raj was then settled piecemeal with others. During this turmoil the Rajas lost almost everything with the exception of a small portion of the old estate with their famous Gar or fort which their descendants still hold, though shorn almost of all power.

Rajas Purnananda Bahubalindra and Achyutananda Bahubalindra the two lineal descendants of the old founder of the family are now in occupation of the delapidated, old but historical fort of Mayanagar to which constant visits are paid by those, whether European and native, who take interest in the study of the ancient history of that part of the country.

### 3. The Raj-family of Hijli.

Hijli, formerly a separate district, is a patch of country in the district of Midnapur bordering on Orissa and the Bay of Bengal. Hijli formed a small Hindu kingdom of historic importance from early times. The name of the founder of this kingdom has been forgotten. The geneology of the family commences from a later Raja Mukunda Das who was 36th in the ascending grade from the late Raja Upendranarayan of Sujamuthagar. For convenience we shall call Raja Mukunda Das as the first Mahishya

Raja of Hijli. During the reign of the 22nd king Raja Hari Das, Sekunder a Pathan ruler of Bengal invaded Hijli who was repulsed after a fighting which continued for three days. The 24th Raja of the line named Raja Gobardhan Das was attacked and defeated in 1505 A. D., by a Pathan chief Musandaly Khan who then styled himself "Padsha" (emperor) of Hijli !!

Raja Gobardhan Das was the last independent Hindu Raja of Hijli. After his defeat Raja Gobardhan Das was well treated and given a command by Musandaly and was recognised as a feudatory Raja of Shujamutha, a portion of the kingdom of Hijli.

Musandaly Khan ruled Hijli from 1505 to 1557 A. D., retaining the service of the defeated Raja of Hijli as his Commander. Musandaly conferred on him the title of "Ranajhap" known as Raja Gobardhan Ranajhap of Shujamutha. Musandaly's successor ruled Hijli from 1557 to 1584

A. D. when he was made a tributary to Delhi. His son Jain Khan succeeded him but was shortly deposed and his father Ishak Khan Masundaly Bahadurkhan was re-installed. He was attacked and killed by Raja Pratapaditya of the Sunderbans, a Kayastha rebel of the Moghuls. Hijli fell in his hands for a very short time, Gurai Pattanayak the then Raja of Shujamutha who was grandson of the last Hindu independent Mahishya Raja of Hijli watched keenly this revolution in Hijli, and made an attempt to recover it but failed. At last a force came from Delhi, the rebel Pratapaditya was arrested and put into an iron cage but died a miserable death in the way to Delhi. Hijli was then annexed to the empire of Delhi.

The kingdom of Hijli was then divided into three parts by the Moghul Government. The descendants of the original founder of the kingdom of Hijli who were ruling Shujamutha were allowed to retain

that portion of it which used to be called Shujamutha. That portion of Hijli called Jalamutha was settled with a Brahmin who was a cook of, and the other portion called Majnamutha was settled with a servant (a Kayastha) of, Bhimsen Mahapatra the minister of the last Mahomedan ruler of Hijli. The last two families are called the Rajas of Jalamutha and Majnamutha.

The last Mahishya Raja of Shujamutha the 36th descendant of Raja Mukunda Das of Hijli in direct line died a few years ago as a pensioner of the Maharajadhiraj of Burdwan. The representatives of the minor branches of the ancient Mahishya rulers of Hijli and afterwards of Shujamutha still survive as petty land-holders in Shujamutha.

#### **4. The Raj-family of Turka.**

The ancient chieftains of Turka bore the title of "Gajendramahapatra" which their descendants as Zemindars still bear. "Gajendramahapatra" is akin to "Gajapati"

the title of the rulers of the province of Orissa where this family has still kinsmen. Some of their ancestors followed the flag of Tumluk Rajas when they conquered Orissa. They were once very powerful and exercised great influence over the bordering tracts of hill countries. The direct lineal descendants of the original founder of the family still survive.

#### **5. The Raj-family of Kutubpur.**

Kutubpur is an old chieftaincy. Even as late as the 16th century, the Rajas Dalasingha and Vikarisingha of this family occupied some portions of Behar. The stone fort of this family is alluded to in the Aini Akbari. The lineal descendants of the family survive in indigent circumstances.

#### **6. The Raj-family of Mahishadal.**

The present Rajas of Mahishadal are Brahmins who got possession (20) of the Raj

(20) Vide History of Mahishadal by Bhagabati Pradhán.



first as a mortgagee of Raja Udayanarayan, a worthless descendant of the well-known Raja Kalyan Roy whose memory is still revered. The line of Rajas of whom Udayanarayan was the last prince of the Raj belonged to the Mahishya community. The said Brahmin mortgagee's descendant (21) secretly took settlement of the Raj from the Nawab of Murshidabad in his own name and the Raj is now in the hands of his descendants. Raja Udayanarayan was a profligate prince, passed his days in a residence near "Udayashagar" a tank excavated by him to be called after his name. The Raja used to be supplied with money by the said up-country Brahmin money-lender the founder of the present Brahmin Raj family who got possession of his Raj as mortgagee and ultimately worked out his ruin. Many of Raja Udaya's descendants are living. They are small land-holders. The

(21) Shukhlál Upádhyáya, vide History of Murshidabad by Kaliprasanna Banerjee.

- . Raj of Mahishadal was founded by a captain of Raja Gobardhanananda Bahubalindra of Mayanagar during the latter part of the 14th century.

### JESSORE AND NADIA DISTRICTS.

#### 7. The Raj-families of Latadwipa and Kankadwipa.

The head-quarters of these two Mahishya Raj-families was in the Meherpur Sub-Division in the district of Nadia. No lineal descendant of these two families do now survive. The geneologists of the Rarhi and Barendra Kulin (22) Brahmins have described them so fully and have spoken so much about their influence over the then Hindu society of Bengal, that it

(22) Vide (a) Edumisra's Sanskrit Karika as published in the "Sambandanirnaya"; (b) Nalupanchanan's Bengalee poems, as translation of the Karika by Edumisra; (c) "Kulakalima" by late Babu Jadav Chandra Lahiri, a Brahmin pleader at Mymensing.

would be unpardonable not to mention them. The boundaries given of these kingdoms show that they comprised about half of the modern districts of Nadia and Jessore in central Bengal.

These two families ruled the kingdoms even as early as the time of Ballal Sen (23) who attempted to re-organise the Hindu society of Bengal.

According to the well-known religious preacher Dharmananda Mahavarati, a large number of Nadia Mahishyas served as soldiers under the Government of Murshidabad only the other day. Among these there are men who are distant kindreds of the old Rajas of Latadwipa and Kankadwipa.

(23) Vide "Kulakalima" by late J. C. Lahiri, pleader, at Mymensing.

---

## CHAPTER X.

### MYMENSING DISTRICT.

#### Navaranga Roy family.

The predecessors and the early history of Raja Navaranga Roy are unknown. He established his head-quarters in the village of Chairpara known as Bhugbetal within Perganah Hazradi in the district of Mymensing. Some members of the family still reside in a portion of the extensive grounds once covered by the palace of the Raja. He excavated many tanks on the western bank of the largest of which lies the old residence of the Raja. The celebrated shrine of Gopinathjee of Bhugbetal was established by the Raja with a grant of Lakheraj lands still occupied by the Shebaita of the shrine.

It is said his Raj extended northward as far as Barantar a village on the border of the Sylhet district. The founder of

Barantar Bhuiya family was Mahamanikya, a celebrated hero who married a daughter of the Raja. After Isha Khan the founder of the Junglebaree-Dewan-family of Mymensing had obtained lease of 22 Perganas from Delhi comprising the whole of Mymensing district and parts of Tippera and Pubna districts, it became necessary for the Dewan to fight out many who resisted claims of Delhi. The Sanad obtained by Isha Khan was really a license to make new conquest within a given sphere. The Dewans had to crush the Navaranga-Roy-family ; open attacks proving unsuccessful, a stratagem was resorted to. Numerous palanquins containing as many brave fighters in the guise of ladies were allowed by the then unsuspecting Raja to enter the Zenana to see the Rani in obedience to a previous understanding. On a given signal these supposed ladies jumped down with drawn swords and began to put to sword all they could lay hands on. During this confused

panic a few members of the family could manage to escape the massacre. The palace was razed to the ground and the Raj was added to the half-independent vast Zemin-dary of the Dewan family. Later on the Dewans allowed some remnants of the family to return and re-occupy the site of the old house with a small estate a portion of which the family still hold. The Barantar Bhuiyas were crushed simultaneously. It is said that at this calamity a large portion of the adherents of the Raja migrated to the western border of the Sylhet district where the community muster very strong.

Raja Navaranga Roy had many Bhuiyas to command his force; a large number of whom still survive though in indigent state. It is believed that the Roy family and the Barantar Bhuiya family formed parts of a ruling group of "Das-chiefs" who had several head-quarters in several parts of that district especially in the vast forest extending from Dacca to Mymensing which

contains many ruins. It is said a similar calamity overtook all of them. This was the real Mahomedan conquest of that part of the country.

### **SYLHET DISTRICT.**

#### **1. The Chowdhury family of Bangsikunda.**

To the west of Bangsikunda lay the kingdom of the Maharaja of Shusung, to the east the land of the Rajas of Laur, and to the north the Khasi hills. The jurisdiction of the family extended many miles to the south. It is now a Perganah much smaller in area within the police-station of Dharmapassa.

The name of the founder of the family is not known. Situated as it was, the family exercised much influence and was powerful. In fact the family was a Bhuiya for the hill-tracts.

The last important member of the family was Radha Gobinda Chowdhury with whom the Perganah of Bangsikunda

was settled during the Permanent settlement. After some years the estate of Bangsikunda went into the hands of the Brahmin Zemindars of Gouripur of Mymensing.

A member of the family embraced the Moslem faith whose descendants still survive to bear testimony to the Mahishya Chowdhury family of Bangsikunda, though very indigent, in the village of Jalusha in Ramdigha Perganah contiguous to Bangsikunda. The head of the Mahomedan Chowdhury family is Mahamad Mamin Chowdhury. Some members connected with female line with the Hindu Chowdhury family of Bangsikunda are living. Some members of the family, very poor and almost beyond recognition, still survive in the village of Sampadpur.

## **2. The Chowdhury afterwards the Raj family of Barakhia.**

To the east of Barakhia lay Jainta, to the west Perganah Chamtala and to the



north Khassi hills. It extended far to the south.

The holders of this tract of land wielded great power and influence. They were independent chiefs. The names of the members of this family above Rajendra Roy Chowdhury are not known. His son was Ranga Roy who had a number of sons viz, Jura Roy, Baru Roy, Shaheb Roy and Asha Roy. Jura Roy and Asha Roy had their head-quarters in their ancestral house surrounded by ditches in the village of Juair which afterwards used to be, and still is, called Juair-Raj-baree." Baru Roy and Shaheb Roy selected their head-quarters in village Dhulpashi in Duhalia Perganah within Sonamganje Subdivision. It is still called "Baru Roy's house."

For a long time Jura Roy and Baru Roy were engaged in warfares with the Khasis who used to make attacks. At last the son of Jura Roy named Ganga Singha, after his uncle Baru Roy was cut to pieces with

his followers by the Khasis, collected a force and being himself at the head attacked the Khasis in the hills wherein the Khasis met with a defeat, acknowledged his supremacy and received him as their Raja. Ganga Singha took possession of 22 Punjees *i. e.* stations *viz.* Chela, Mayanaring, Mulkan and others and assumed the title of Raja Ganga Singha Roy Chowdhury.

Raja Ganga Singha used to live in Juair house. After his death the Khasis re-occupied their lost Punjees but continued to make presents every year on the day of Ramnamami Puza, before Chandi, the family goddess of the family at Juair. The ruins of the Juair Raj-baree still exists where a fair takes place every year at Ramnamami-day. Raja Ganga Singha died without any issue.

Asha Roy and Shaheb Roy were in occupation of the family property for some years. It is with them that some of the property was settled during the Permanent

Settlement. Shaheb Roy's grand-son Joy Gobinda Chowdhury succeeded Asha Roy and Baru Roy. He sold his inheritance to one Kabil Mamud of Duhalia and to some others. His residence with village Dhulpashi and many other villages now form a respectable portion of the Zemindari of Gobardhan Babu of Duara Bazar.

Joy Gobinda's mother Kisoree Chowdhurani died at an advanced age of 90 in the depopulated and weedy house of Baru Roy at Dhulpashi in 1303 B. S. During her life-time the Khasi-Sardars used to make presents of some "paus" to her at Ramnamami Day of each year to commemorate the celebration of the installation of Raja Ganga Singha.

Baru Roy was so influential in the locality that a measurement of rice called "**Baru Roy's Pura**" is still in vogue in Duhalia Perganah. He was a strong, robust and tall man. The impression of his right hand on a brick-built height near the ghat of his tank

in front of his house at Dhulpashi is bearing testimony.

An account of the old Mahishya families of Dacca, and other places of the country is reserved for the next edition.

### **The titles of the Mahishyas.**

The following are the titles generally added after the names of the Mahishyas of the country. Many of them are more largely used in the Western Bengal.

1. Bahubalindra = Like the god Indra,  
the strength of arms.  
This is the title of the  
Raj family of Mayana-  
gar.
2. Gajendramahapatra = Master of ele-  
phants. This is the  
title of the Raj family  
of Turka.
3. Bhumipa = Master of soil. Title of a  
number of land-holding  
families specially the Bhu-

iyas of Paharpur who  
represent a branch of  
the Mahishadal Rajas.

4. Senapati = General.
5. Hazra = Commander of thousand.
6. Satara = Commander of hundred.
7. Bhuiya = Land-holder.
8. Kapat, = Keeper of the gate.
9. Hati = Elephant.
10. Bagh = Tiger.
11. Kharah = Sword.
12. Malla = Wrestler.
13. Dalai = Headman of the peasant militia.
14. Shamaree = Fighter.
15. Ranasingha = Lion of the fight.
16. Betal = Demon.
17. Nayaka = Leader.
18. Jana = A prince.
19. Ardhaka = Leader of  $\frac{1}{2}$  the division.
20. Giri = Mountain.
21. Das = A title used by the largest number from high

to low. The Rajas of  
Hijli bear this title.

22. Roy = A nobleman.
23. Chowdhury = Holder of a Zemindaree.
24. Biswas = Trusted officer.
25. Lasker = Fighter.
26. Moulik = Original land-holder.
27. Jotedar = Holder of a jote.
28. Taluqdar = Holder of a Taluq or a  
share thereof.
29. Sarkar = Officer of a Sirker *i. e.*  
a division.
30. Purkayastha = Account-keeper of a  
Perganah.
31. Mansi = Sub-treasurer.
32. Mazumdar = Revenue officer.
33. Bhupati = Lord of the marches.
34. Mahanayaka = Lord-Lieutenant.
35. Samanta = Feudatory prince.
36. Mahapatra = Prime minister.
37. Garnayaka = Commander of the fort.
38. Doubarika = Sentinel at the gate.

39. Bhupal = Protector of the land.  
 (Vide the list of titles of the Mahishyas as published by Babu Nagendranath Basu (a Kayastha) in his dictionary called the "Viswakosha").

## CHAPTER XI.

### Social status of Hindu castes arranged by groups in order.

#### CLASS I.

Brahmins

#### CLASS II.

Old fighting castes :—(i) Raj-poots, Khandaits, Mahishyas, Aguris.

Castes of other professions :—(ii) Vaidyas, Kayasthas, Karans.

#### CLASS III.

The Navasakhas :—Barui, Gandhabanik, Kalita, Kamar, Kansari, Kumar, Kuri,

Madhunapit, Malakar, Mayra, Napit, Satgop, Sankhari, Tamli, Tanti, Teli, Tili, Kāstha, Patial.

CLASS IV.

Goalas, Sudras, Golams, Koch.

CLASS V.

Subarnabanik, Jugi, Sutradhar, Sunri, (Shaha), Surjabansi, Swarnakar, Kacharn, Lohait-kuri, Nath, Tipara.

CLASS VI.

Bagdi, Chasha-Dhoba, Dhoba, Jalia-Kaibarta, Kawali, Malo, Jhalo, Namasudra, Patni, Pod, Tiyar, Kapali, Kotal, Hajang, Karni etc.

CLASS VII.

Chamar, Dom, Garo, Muchi, Hari, Bhuimali, Kaora, Konai, Lodha.

---



## APPENDIX (A).

*(The Memorial)*

To

The Hon'ble Sir. L. Hare, C. S. I., C. I. C.

LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR OF EASTERN  
BENGAL AND ASSAM.

The humble memorial of the undersigned  
members of the Mahishya Caste of  
the.....

**MOST RESPECTFULLY SHEWETH:—**

1. That your Honor's humble memorialists perused, with unmitigated pleasure and gratitude, the Resolution No. 17690 Appointment Department, dated the 15th February 1907, as published in the "Eastern Bengal and Assam Gazette" of the 16th February, and that your Honor's humble memorialists beg to offer their heart-felt thanks to the Government for trying to remove a grievance so long keenly felt by members of the Mahishya caste to which your Honor's humble memorialists have the honour to belong.

2. That the Mahishya caste on whose behalf this humble memorial is submitted is locally known by

such different names as Das, Parashar Das, Mahishya &c., but by whatever of these names the members of this community be called, they all belong to the same Mahishya race (vide Census Procedure Code 1901) and have almost the same status and strength throughout the length and breadth of the country.

3. That, according to the historical account of the country, the only old fighting races of Bengal previous to the advent of the Mahomedan conquerors, were the Mahishyas, the Aguris, the Gualas and Mallas, of whom the Mahishyas and Mallas alone maintained independence in the districts of Midnapore, Beerbhurn, and Bankura till the time of the downfall of the Pathan rulers of Bengal, and were not wholly reduced to the state of actual cultivators till they were finally crushed at the end of the 16th century.

4. That in this district the Mahishyas form one of the most important Hindu castes.

5. That among the Hindus, the Mahishyas alone resemble the Mahomedans in all other respects except in the matters of religion—both the communities being mostly agriculturists, with a thin layer of aristocracy decaying day by day for want of nourishment, and both being equally brave and strong, and the proportion of the educated to the uneducated being almost the same in both the communities.

6. That the Mahishyas like their hardy and brave

brethren, the Mahomedans after them, falling down from their former position could ill-afford to compete for Government service with those who have for various reasons, been in advance of them in that particular matter.

7. That having regard to the number, strength, intelligence, perseverance, patience and education, combined with the fact that most of them are substantial agriculturists and a very large number of them substantial landholders, this community is one of the most important Hindu castes of Bengal.

8. That the Mahishya caste being now mostly simple and hardy cultivators, have little pretensions to politics and have implicit faith in the sense of justice of the Government.

9. That your Honor's humble memorialists are ready and willing to render as much assistance to the Government as lies in their power in giving effect to the Resolution, so far as their own caste is concerned by corresponding with all the existing social Mahishya Samities and other similar institutions throughout the country if the Government be graciously pleased so to direct.

10. That unless some special form of application be prescribed, and some measures be taken against deviation from the line of action indicated in the Resolution, in making appointments, your Honor's

memorialists fear that it will take a long time to give effect to the said Resolution.

11. That under the circumstances, your Honor's humble memorialists most respectfully pray that the Government will graciously be pleased to issue instructions to the heads of several departments, both in districts and sub-divisions to see that a due proportion of the Government patronage is secured to the caste to which your Honor's memorialists have the honour to belong.

And your Honor's humble memorialists shall, as in duty bound, ever pray. \*

\* This is the form of the memorial submitted by the Mahishyas of the several centres of the New Province in July 1907. A copy of one of the circular letters issued by the Government in response to the memorials has been annexed as Appendix (B).

---

## APPENDIX (B)

*(The circular letter of the Govt.)*

No. 13292C.

Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam.

Appointment Department.

Appointment Branch.

*Shillong, the 2nd December, 1907.*

FROM

C. TINDALL, ESQ. I. C. S.,  
Under-Secretary to Government.

TO

Babu Pyari Mohan Das, Pleader,  
Sonamgange, (Sylhet)

Sir,

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your memorial praying that a due praportion of Government patropage may be accorded to the community which you and the other signatories to the memorial represent.

2. In reply, I am to say that Government will always be prepared to aid your community in any educational scheme that may be put forward for its amelioration, and to add that if you will bring to the notice of the local officers, the cases of applicants for

Government service in your community who are qualified according to rules, the Lieutent-Governor has no doubt that their claims will receive sympathetic consideration.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant

(Sd) .....

for Under-Secretary.

## APPENDIX (C).

The Address.

To

The Honourable Sir Lancelot Hare,

LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR OF EASTERN BENGAL  
AND ASSAM.

May it please your Honour,

We, the undersigned, for ourselves and on behalf of the Mahishya community of this Province, beg leave to approach Your Honour with this humble tribute of address.

The Mahishya community, we have the honour to represent, comprises a considerable portion of the Hindu community, has well-defined position in the upper grades of the Hindu society, forms a well-recognised section of old gentry of the Province and represents an important part of the landed interest in the Province, both in the shape of middle and lower grades of landowners and agriculturists.

We are able to say with pride that ours is a community which has ever been deeply loyal to the Government and is fully conscious of the benefits of the British rule in India. After centuries and centuries of anarchy and misgovernment it is under the British rule that the country is enjoying equal rights of free-citizenship, liberal education, uninterrupted peace, security of person and property, rapid progress in all possible directions, freedom of thought and action, unprecedented in the history of India. Under the rule free-booters like the Pindaries and the Thugs disappeared from the land, and bands of dacoits subsequently arose as remnants only to be crushed for good at the hands of the benign Government. Our community firmly believes that the lawless actions of the seditionists are only the precursor of their utter annihilation.

Our community avows with heartfelt gratitude that the British Government is the only Government in the annals of India which has, at heart, the interest

of the whole population of this vast country and not of any particular race, caste or creed. We are conscious that the Government is practically fighting out a battle for the millions who once groaned under oppression and injustice. We pray that the All Merciful God, who has brought the British people to rule us, may help them in fulfilling their great mission.

It is most re-assuring that Your Honour has directed attention to that important part of duty, imposed on the rulers of a country like India inhabited by races and castes representing interest often conflicting, which consists in nursing, with due care and tenderness, the interests of different castes and races lying in different stages of civilisation in their respective onward course to progress. We hope that the New Province under Your Honour's administration will serve as a model province.

We take this opportunity of expressing our heartfelt gratitude to Your Honour for the Resolution of 1907 which provides for the distribution of patronage among all classes. We will not fail to use our endeavours for the advancement of our community in the manner indicated in the Circular Letter, from Your Honour's Government, of the 2nd, December, 1907, and we trust that we shall always receive sympathetic consideration in this matter which is so vital to us.

In consideration of the backwardness of our com-



munity in matters of education, special provisions for the establishment and maintenance of schools and boarding houses in important Mahishya centres are very desirable. We read with great satisfaction the Resolution of the Government providing a number of new scholarships for backward classes. These measures will, we hope, serve to ameliorate the condition of our community. We may add that we submitted an Educational Scheme to the Government sometime back. We earnestly hope that the same will meet with Your Honour's favourable consideration.

In common with the rest of India, we desire to express our gratitude for the recent administrative changes announced by the Secretary of State, and we hope that in making these changes due regard will be had to the interests of all classes.

We cannot but take this opportunity of expressing our deepest hatred against sedition, lawlessness and anarchism existing in some parts of the country. We trust that the measures which the Government has taken will serve to suppress the evil, and we shall always aid the Government in the maintenance of law and order.

Lastly, we beg to give expression to the deepest loyalty of our community to the Government and our greatest regard for, and confidence in, Your Honour's administration, and we pray that the Almighty God

may grant Your Honour health and vigour for discharging the responsible duties of Your Honour's exalted office.

*We beg to subscribe ourselves,*  
Your Honour's most obedient servants. \*

### APPENDIX (D).

A deputation of a large number of influential and leading Mahishya gentlemen of the Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam waited upon, and, on behalf of the Mahishya community of the Province, presented an Address to, the Hon'ble Sir Lancelot Hare, K. C. S. I., C. I. E., I. C. S., the Lieutenant Governor, in the Government House, Dacca, on the 5th January, 1909, and His Honour was pleased to give the following reply :—

"Gentlemen,

"I have had much pleasure in receiving your address, and it is with much satisfaction that I accord you a very hearty welcome.

"I understand you represent a very large and important community of this province, constituting nearly  $\frac{2}{3}$  of its population, and that in coming before me with this address, your object is to call my attention

\* The names of the leading Mahishya signatories of different districts of the new Province are omitted as being numerous.

to your wants and aspirations and to interest me in your welfare.

"You call to mind the benefits which the country has received from the British rule, and point out the protection which this rule afforded to you and the opportunities you have thereby had for peaceful development and progress. It is very gratifying to me that you recognize so clearly, as you evidently do recognize, the impartial character of the Government and its honest desire to extend its protection alike to all classes and creeds. You may rest assured that I shall always pay a most sympathetic regard to your representations.

"The importance at this particular moment of putting yourselves forward rests in the fact that certain reforms are now under contemplation and you are naturally anxious that in these reforms your interests shall not be disregarded. Hitherto it has been for the Government to ascertain your wants and requirements and to take the necessary measures to safe-guard your interest. This duty will continue to fall upon the Government and adequate powers must be retained by the Government to enable it to carry out this purpose. At the same time, Government looks to you not only for moral support, but under the circumstances which now exist, it expects active assistance. I welcome your strong expression of hatred and condemnation of the

lawless actions of which certain persons have been guilty, and I count upon your active co-operation in their suppression. I would remind you that unless you come forward, even at some personal risk to yourselves, with information of the tyranny and oppression by which certain misguided people are attempting to force you to act contrary to your natural inclination and wishes, it is exceedingly difficult for Government to afford you adequate protection. I therefore welcome the formation of your society, as it will not only give you the means of bringing prominently to the notice of Government and the public your views and interests, but will create leaders who will be in a position authoritatively to inform the Government of abuses which may be found to exist.

“It remains for me only to thank you for the kind expression of your good will towards me and to assure you again that the sympathetic interest of this Government will always be extended towards you, and that every effort will be made to secure your prosperity and welfare.”

---

## APPENDIX (E).

## THE MANIFESTO.

*The Mahishya Community of the Country.*

SIRS,

It is well-known that we, the Mahishyas, are deeply loyal to the British Government and, as such, do not require any manifesto to trumpet out our loyalty. We have all along offered resistance to the forces of lawlessness and disorder. But yet it cannot be said that we have discharged all our duties both to Government and to ourselves. It is therefore necessary to understand our duties. It is for this reason that we the undersigned Mahishya members of the province have ventured to define our duties and responsibilities under the present state of things. We have already indicated that it is not enough to say that we are loyal. Loyalty is, as we understand, a deep sense of gratitude to the protecting power, an implicit faith in its sense of justice, firm allegiance and attachment to it and a determination to come to its help whenever required. We live under the protection of a benign Government the like of which perhaps never existed in this wretched country within the memory of history.

A distinguished citizen of America, a country which is believed to enjoy liberty in the highest degree conceivable, confessed the other day on his return from

England that English people under their Government enjoy liberty in a far greater degree than the Americans themselves do. We, the Indian races, live under the protection of that very Government modified only so far as to suit the requirements of the continent of India, representing the most divers and conflicting interests the world has ever known. It is by the Divine will that the greatest and the most advanced race in the world has taken upon itself the onerous duty of administering even-handed justice to Indian races claiming interests of so conflicting a nature.

It is a notorious fact that this conflict of intrests has rendered solution of good many problems extremely difficult. We require a strong extraneous force to keep us within our respective bounds for the common good of the country and for preventing us from trampling on one another's interests. We have seen formation of leagues for monopolising privileges showered on the country by the British rule. Nay, this and similar other actions persisted in by some people have led many to believe that it is not possible to receive even the blessing of a proposal of gift of new privileges and rights from the Government without misgivings ; as such privileges, unless duly and carefully regulated, would practically arm some with tremendous power depriving others of that protection so long guaranteed by the impartial character of the British rule.

We feel for those who are so grievously labouring under a misconception of actual state of things. We the Indian races, are still steeped in superstition, bigotry, selfishness, murderous race-feelings and clanishness in all departments of life. We have not sufficiently learnt as yet to respect one another. We can rarely appreciate education and progress of others. Many of us are frightened out of wits if they hear of education being spread among the people ! Indeed our education is too imperfect, society too primitive, notions yet too crude, minds too narrow, conceptions of things too hazy to entitle us to the position of the great ruling races of the world. Modern European conception of society, brotherhood, fellow-citizenship, fellow-feeling, equal rights, charity, duty and government has entered into us only skin-deep. It is but too plain that no Indian race or group of races can be expected to be in a position to rule India in the best interest of the whole group of Indian races within even centuries to come. British Government in India is therefore an indispensable necessity. Nothing on earth can replace it. It is the right thing in the right place. It is the Divine will that myriads of the Indian races, whom we pity and who are half-dead under tyranny and oppression of ages, will revive and re-occupy their respective positions under the vivifying influence of the British nation to the eternal glory of the British rule. Those who

will stand in the way of such progress will perish like flies in a conflagration. As the people of the country have once tasted the advantages of the British rule, they will stick to it and stand by it.

The advantages of the British rule alluded to above are real and not imaginary. There is inconceivable progress in all directions. No right-thinking man can be ungrateful to the Government. It has worked a revolution in the direction of progress. Look at the condition of the several classes of men of our country. The treatment meted out to the Zemindars by the previous Government is recorded in history, we need not revert to that. They are now a prosperous class and are treated like the English gentry and nobility. The unsettled condition of the country previously rendered trade risky and often unprofitable. The traders were victims of the hardier races of the country, who swooped down upon them at pleasure. But protection and facilities afforded by the British rule has opened to the trader easy path to wealth. Even shop-keepers belonging to the lowest classes, so helpless and miserable in society, are now becoming wealthy and emerging out from their degradation.

Even the higher classes of agriculturists, not to speak of the lower ones, were, for various reasons, doomed things. Now their disadvantages are giving way. They are no longer hampered by unjust in-



terference against free-trade and exportation which used to compel them to sell the whole produce of their jotes at a nominal price, and as a result they used to remain in abject poverty and almost in a state of slavery to the convenience of some. Now free-trade has proved a blessing to the agriculturists. They now get full reward of their labour and are bringing abundance of wealth into the country. They are now enjoying enviable freedom and comfort. They are growing in importance and are fast becoming a power.

With the exception of a few weavers of Bengal who suffer from want of spirit of enterprise, all other artisan classes are rising and thriving fast. Great demand for labour is ameliorating the condition of the labouring class. The country is thus continually growing wealthy. Signs of growing prosperity are visible every where in the country.

Some sections are progressing beyond dreams. Even some of them have become giddy at the height of their flights of fortune and are asking for the moon.

The Mahishya community as a class understood the real nature of the new sort of agitation and stood aloof from it. And when the clouds of sedition, disaffection and lawlessness were looming in the horizon, the Mahishyas were the first among those having position and stake in the country to declare from the very beginning their deep loyalty to the Government and their

appreciation of the manifold blessings showered by it on the country, and their intense hatred against seditious movements. Other big Hindu races subsequently did the same. The Rajputs, the Shikhs, the Jaths, the sturdy Maharatta cultivators, and many others, as well as the ruling princes, the landed aristocracy and various other professions have since declared their loyalty one by one. The loyalty of the Mahomedan community is too well-known to require mentioning. Account must be taken of the dumb millions deeply attached to the Government though no expression of loyalty could proceed from them. Indeed the Government is dearly loved by the people.

Whatever may be the methods of other loyal sections, we, the Mahishyas, must demonstrate our loyalty by actions as we are always doing. We must be on the alert that none of us, whether adults or children, landholders or professional men, agriculturists or any, be seduced. We must be actively on the side of law, order, progress and humanity. \*

\* The names of the signatories are omitted, they being thousands in number.

---

## APPENDIX (F).

(ABOUT THE MANIFESTO.)

No. 2922A.

Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam

Appointment Department.

Appointment Branch.

From

THE HON'BLE MR. P. C. LYON, C. S. I., I. C. S.  
Chief-Secretary to Government.

To

BABU KAMAL CHANDRA DAS,  
Secretary to the Mahishya samitee,  
Sonamganje, Sylhet.

Dated Shillong, the 1st July, 1909.

Sir,

I am directed to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of your letter no 342 dated the 28th May, 1909, forwarding a copy of the Manifesto of your samitee in Dacca and Sonamganje, and to say that His Honour the Lieutenant Governor has perused it with interest

and notes with gratification the expressions of loyalty to the established Government that are contained in it.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant

(Sd) P. C. Lyon.

Chief-Secretary to Government.

---

## APPENDIX (G).

### (His Excellency the Viceroy's appreciation.)

Letter no. 1047-T., dated Camp Shillong, the 7th August, 1909, from the Offg : Commissioner of the Surma Valley and Hill Districts, to the Deputy Commissioner, Sylhet.

---

I have the honour to request that you will be so good as to inform Babu Kamal Chandra Das, Secretary to the Mahishya Samitee at Sonamgange that his Excellency the Viceroy has appreciated the loyal sentiments expressed in the Manifesto issued by the Mahishyas of the Dacca

and Sonamgange samitees, a copy of which was submitted by the Local Government to the Government of India.

---

Memo no. 3604.

Dated Sylhet, the 14th August, 1909.

Copy forwarded to the Assistant Secretary to the Mahishya samitee, Sonamgange with reference to his no. 339 dated the 28th May, 1909.

(Sd) I. J. Barniville  
Deputy Commissioner, Sylhet.











301.44/DAS



7385

